



# WHEN AUTISM IS TEARING YOU APART WORKBOOK

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HOW TO PUT YOURSELF  
BACK TOGETHER

Thanks for downloading this free workbook.  
I hope you find the questions helpful and  
you gain some insight.

I hope you will find some useful ways to  
restore your well being and manage your  
reactions.

Kind regards

Liz

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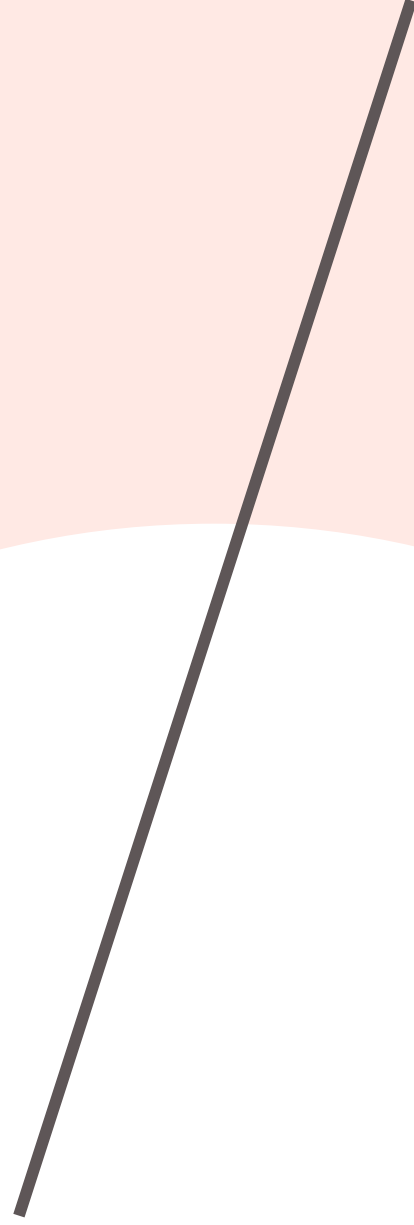
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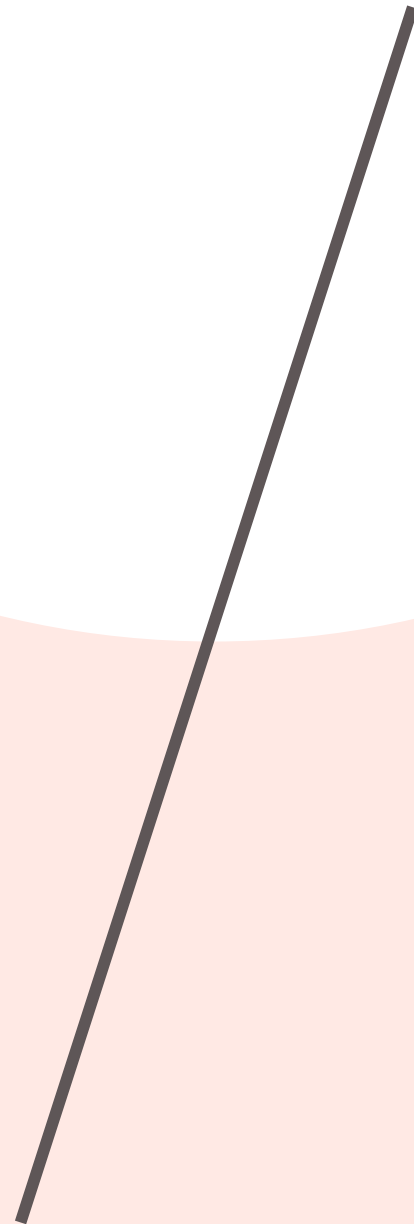
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01



C H A P T E R



01

Try not to dive into these questions and drown in the first chapter of the book! Just pick one example for each, even though you may have more.

1. What painful experiences have you had because you're the mother of a child with autism?

2. Who are the worst experts you have seen soar on your journey with your child with autism.

3. What didn't you like, or offended you?

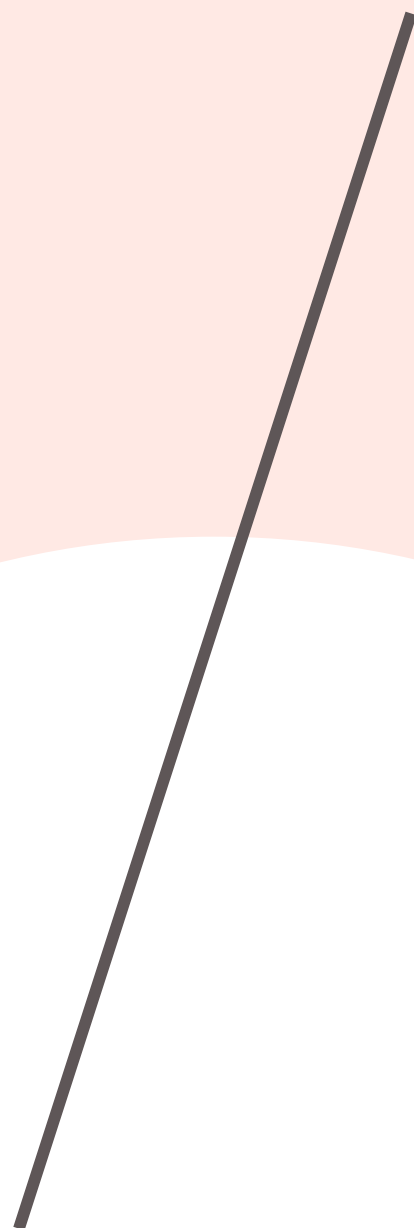
4. How did you feel after you saw them?

5. Who are the best experts you have seen on your journey with your child with autism?

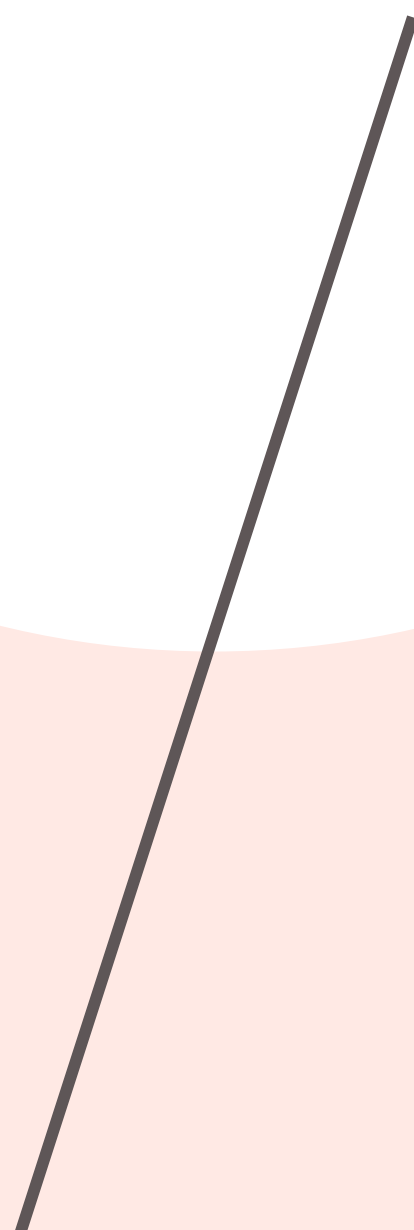
6. What did you like?

7. How did you feel after you saw them?

02



C H A P T E R



02

1. What social expectations do you feel?

What do you think others expect of you?

2. Are they fair and reasonable in light of your child with autism?

3. What expectations do you have of yourself?

4. Are they fair and reasonable in light of your child with autism?

5. Do any of the above expectations not sit with you, not match your particular situation or not beat in time with your heart?

6. What painful experiences have you had because of the expectations of others in relation to your child with autism?

7. Name only one at this time. You are likely to have others.

8. How did you react at the time?

9. How did you feel at the time?

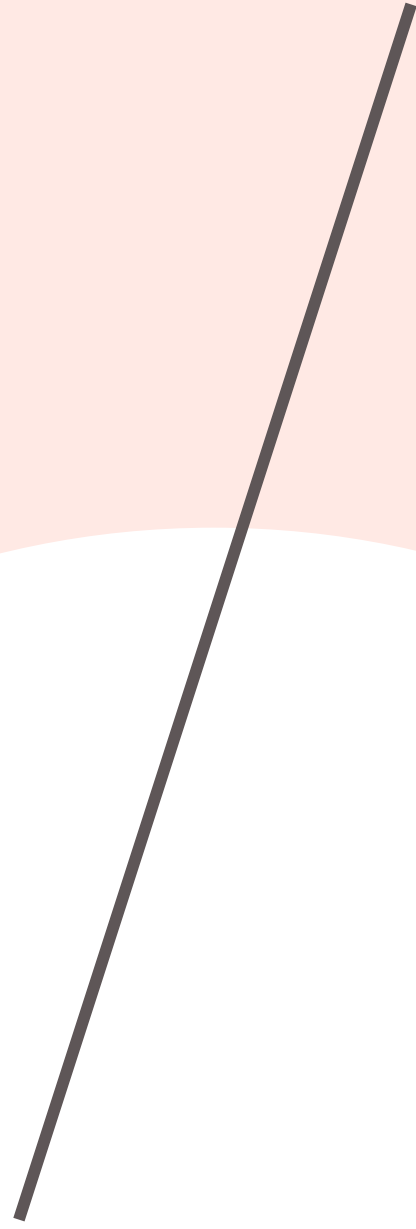
10. Did you do the best you could with the resources and knowledge you had available to you at the time?

11. Is there anything you'd like to change?

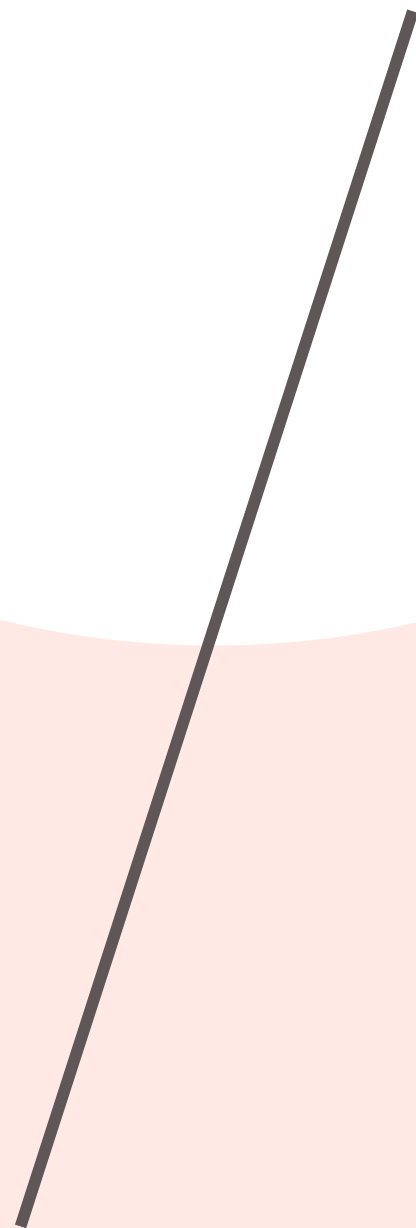
12. Write this statement and say it out loud like you mean it, even if you don't just yet. My best is good enough!



03



C H A P T E R



03

1. With so many theories to choose from, which one feels right and resonates with you?
2. What do you like about that theory?
3. Does it fit with your children and your child with autism in particular?
4. Have you thought about which theory might work best for which of your children?
5. Which theory did you like the least?
6. What didn't you like about it?
7. What new perspectives about parenting style did you get out of this chapter?
8. What's one thing you're going to do differently?

04



CHAPTER

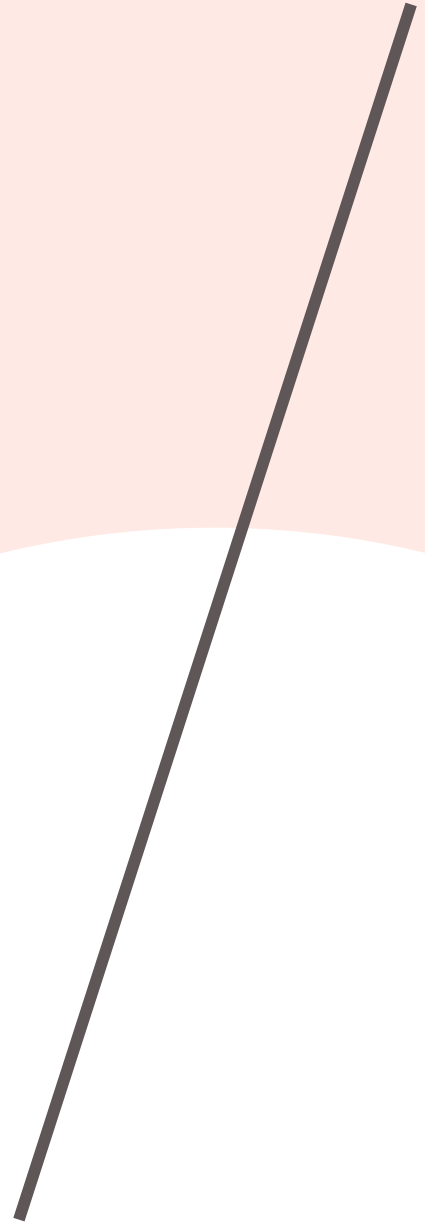
04

1. Have any of the changes in diagnostic criteria affected you?

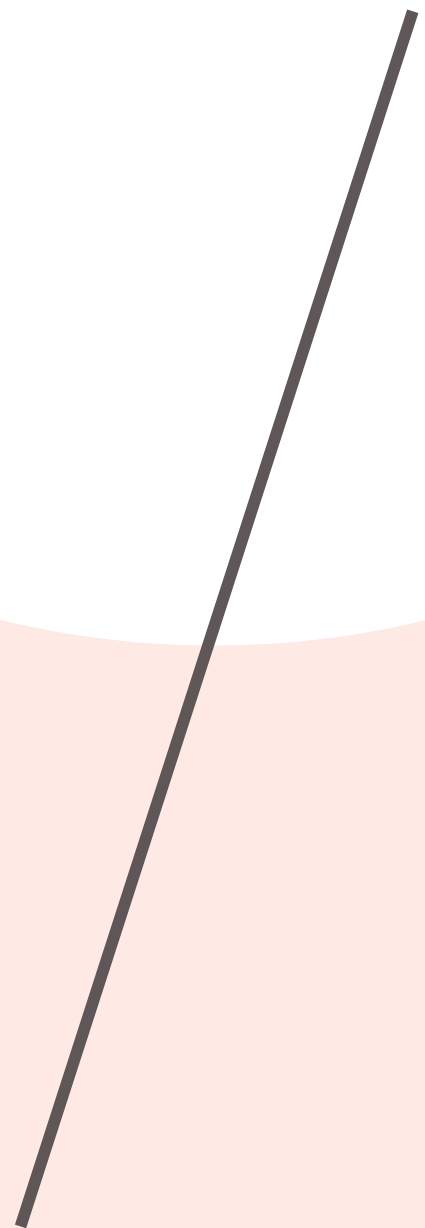
2. In what way? Have the changes been better or worse for you?

3. Now you know more about the criteria, how can you use it to phrase some of the needs your child has in a style that experts will listen to?

05



C H A P T E R



05

1. What behaviours of your child do you find the most troubling?

2. What have you tried to cope with them?

3. How do the behaviours affect the rest of the family?

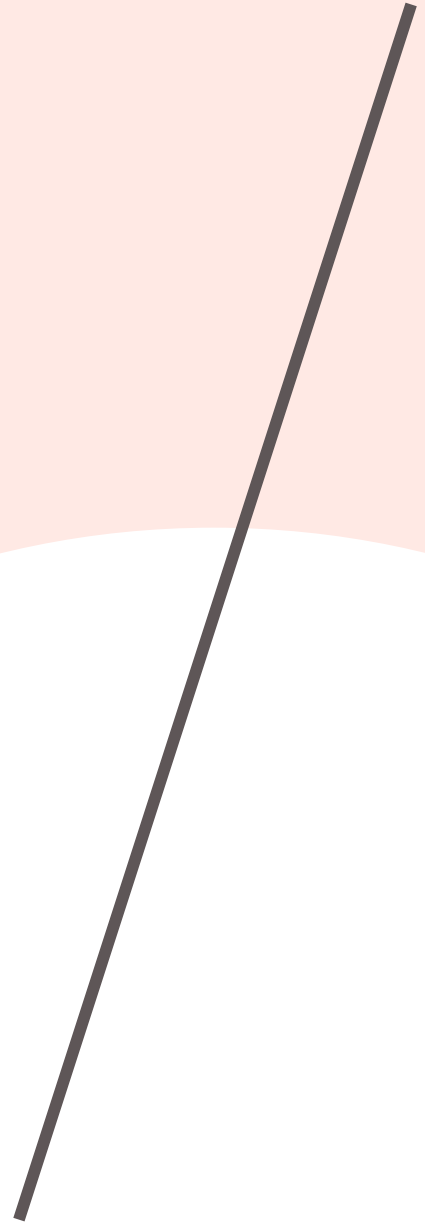
4. How can you support your other family members when the behaviour is happening?

5. What can you do differently in response to the behaviours of your child?

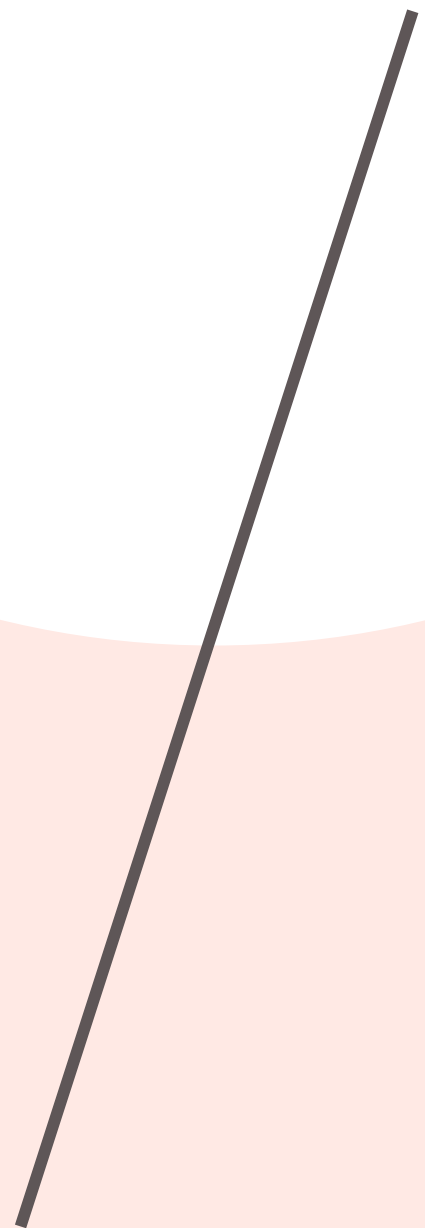
6. What do you do after the behaviour is over?

7. How do you feel before, during and after the behaviour? Include emotions and physical reactions like racing heart beat and your own behaviours.

06



CHAPTER



06

1. What risks or consequences have you identified from reading this chapter?

2. Click here to take the Depression, Anxiety, Stress assessment called the DASS-21 developed by Lovibond & Lovibond.

<https://www.scu.edu.au/media/scueduau/currentstudents/services/counselling/downloads/Depression-Anxiety-Stress-Scales-DASS3481.pdf>

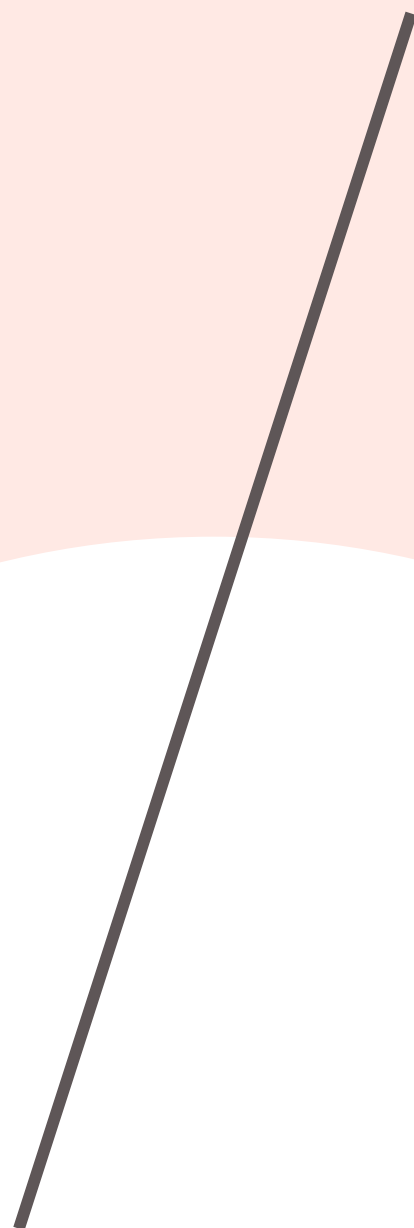
3. How did you score? If you have high scores it might be a good idea to see your doctor or reach out for some therapy. You don't have to do this alone.

4. Isolation can be a serious issue for our tribe. What's one thing can you do to reduce some of your feelings of isolation? Who can you reach out to? Maybe a facebook page with fellow tribe members or call a friend or get some professional support.

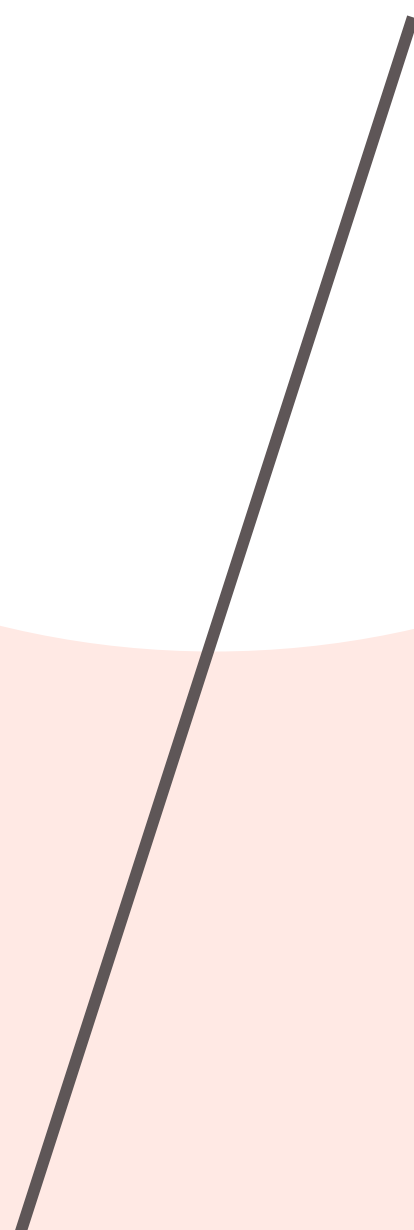


5. Write down one specific action you're going to take. What's the name of the facebook group, or what's your friend's name.

07



C H A P T E R



07

1. Did you do the exercise at the end of the last chapter? What did you do to reduce your feelings of isolation?

2. How has that been working for you? Has it been helpful or not?

3. Do you need to try something else? If so, what?

4. Here's the link to the PTSD quiz.

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/adult-sr/ptsd-checklist.asp>

5. How did you score?

6. How did you feel about some of the questions?

7. What new insights have you gained from doing the quiz?

1. Do you meet the criteria for PTSD? If yes, I encourage you to seek support from a therapist. PTSD is a very real thing that will impact your life and the lives of those you love so dearly. Reach out for support.

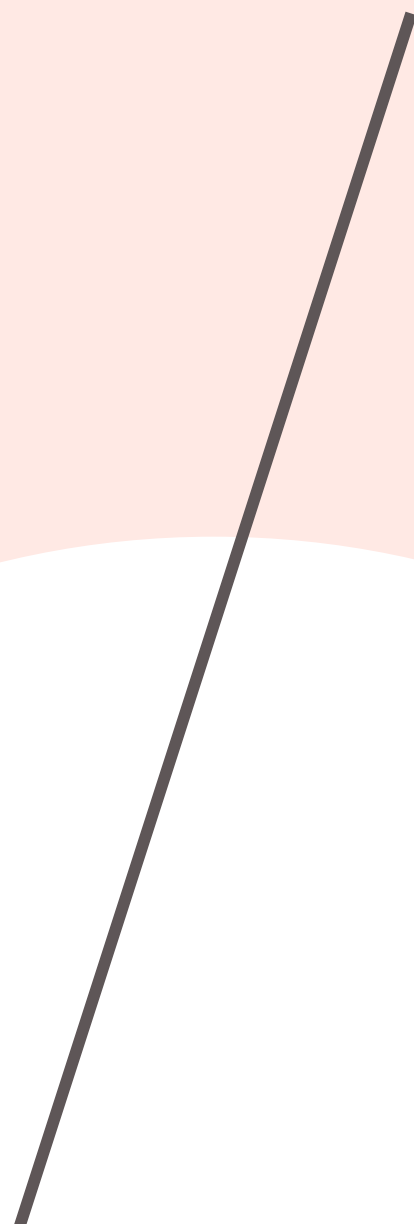
2. Did you reach out for support? Why or why not?

3. What stopped you?

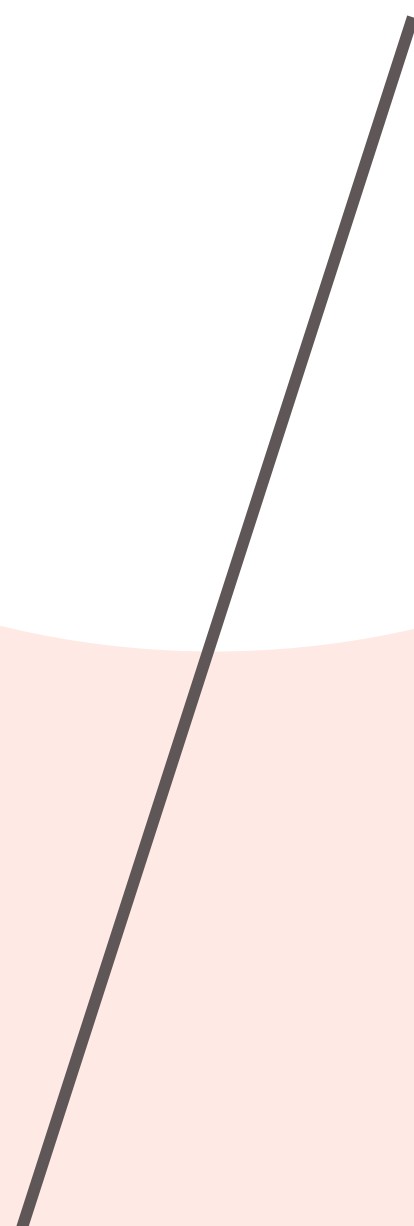
4. Can you do anything to remove those obstacles or are they excuses because you feel scared or ashamed?

There is no shame in what you're experiencing. You're a human on the front line of a war zone.

08



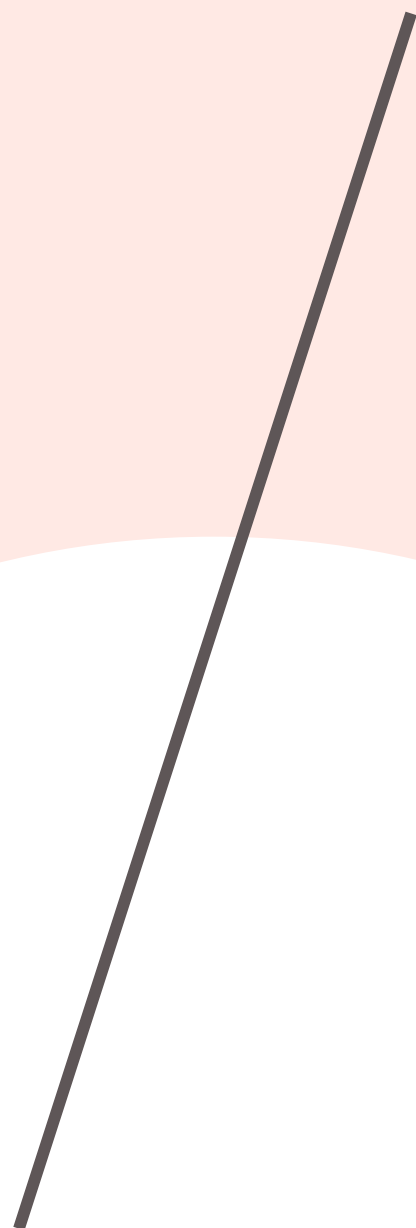
C H A P T E R



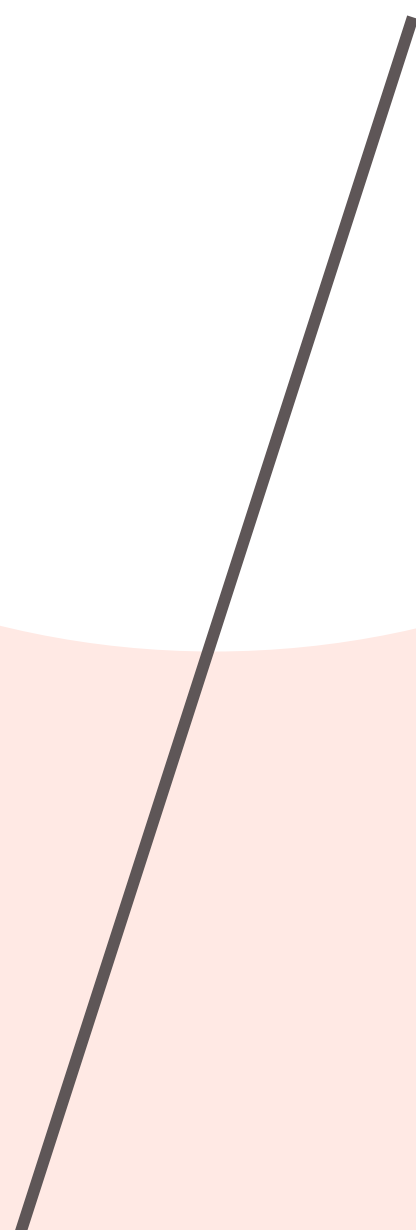
08

1. Can you recognise the three states of the polyvagal nervous system?
2. Can you think of a time when you were in each zone?
3. What have you tried before to calm yourself?
4. Did it help or not?
5. Why or why not?
6. What's one thing you're going to try that you haven't tried before?

09



C H A P T E R



09

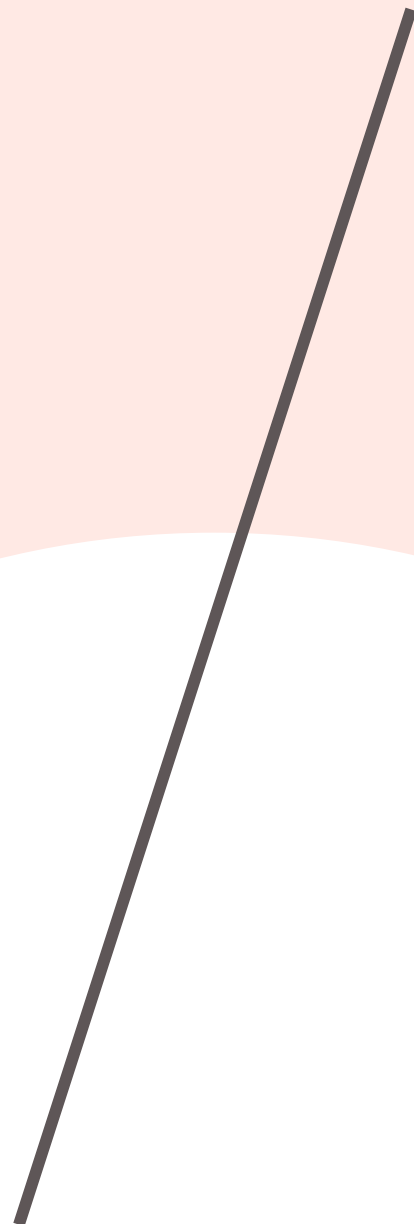
1. Do you experience any of the symptoms that describe PTSD?
2. Which ones?
3. What is a ‘holding environment’?
4. How might you create a holding environment for your child?
5. What’s one thing you can do when you and your child are upset and distressed to calm so you can co-regulate your child?
6. What’s going to make calming difficult so you can co-regulate?
7. Is there anything you can do differently to incorporate calming and co-regulation with your child?



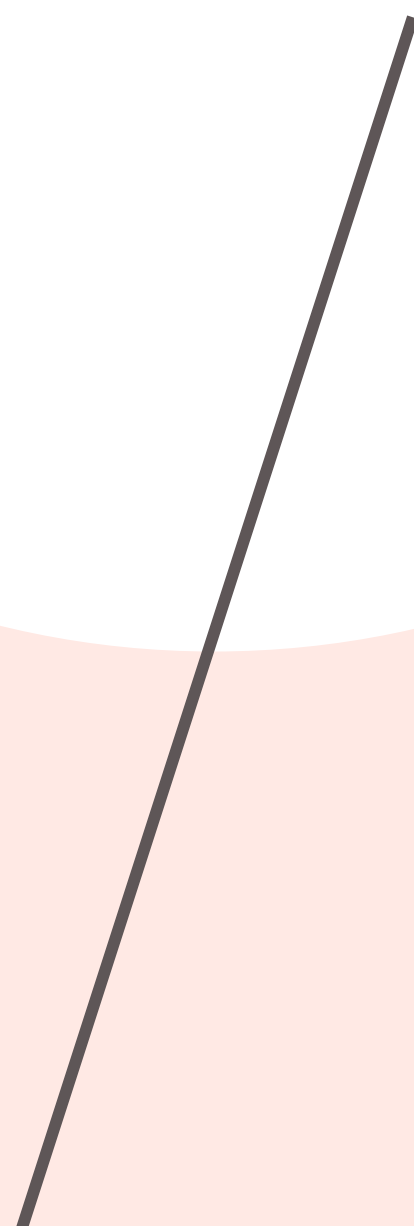
8. What have you done well this week, even though it was really difficult?

9. What's one thing you're good at and like about yourself? (Nothing is not the correct answer!!)

10



C H A P T E R



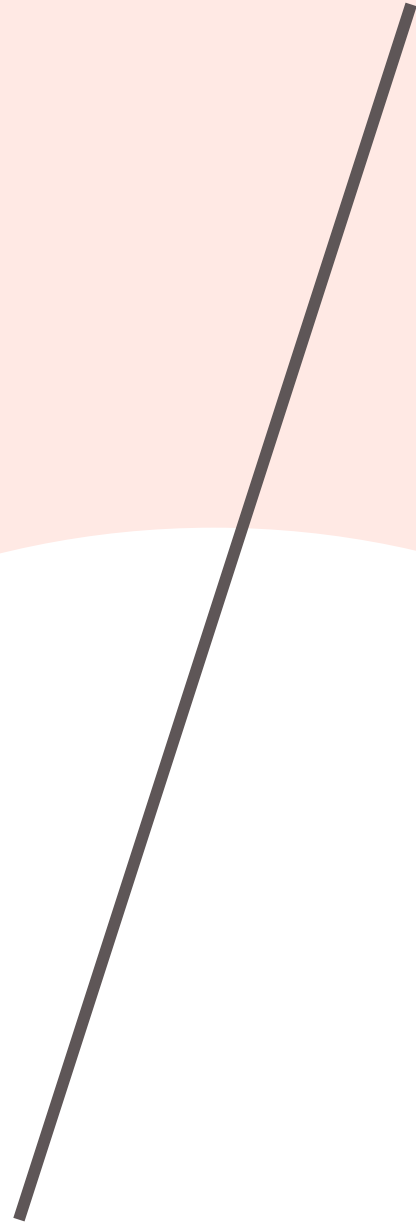
10

1. Do you experience hypervigilance?
2. Describe what happens for you.
3. Do you experience depression?
4. What's that look like for you?
5. Has your child experienced trauma?
6. List some of the traumas your child has experienced.
7. How do you feel when you look at the list? Name an emotion or two if you can.
8. How do you feel about your child when you look at the list?
9. Might some of your child's behaviour be trying to tell you anything?

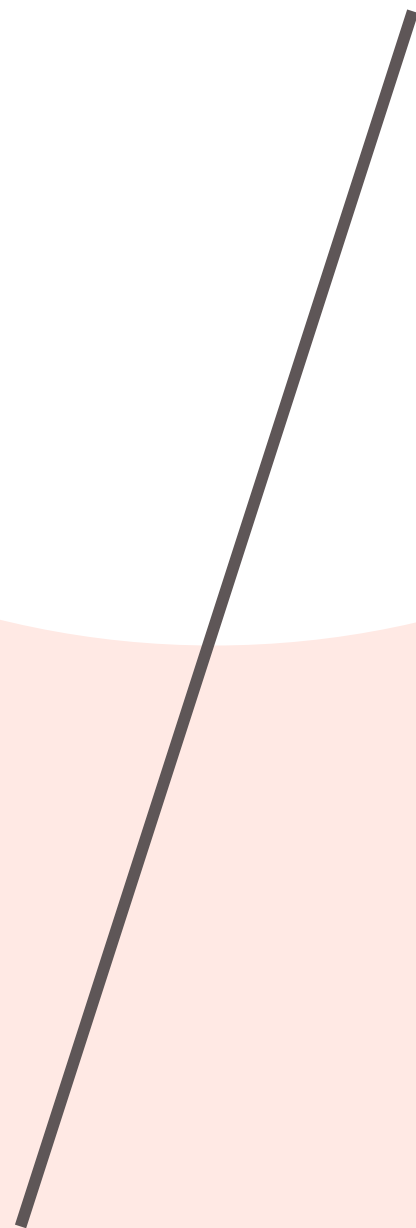
10. What might your child be trying to tell you through their behaviour?

11. Might you have experienced some 'vicarious trauma' through your child?

1 1



C H A P T E R

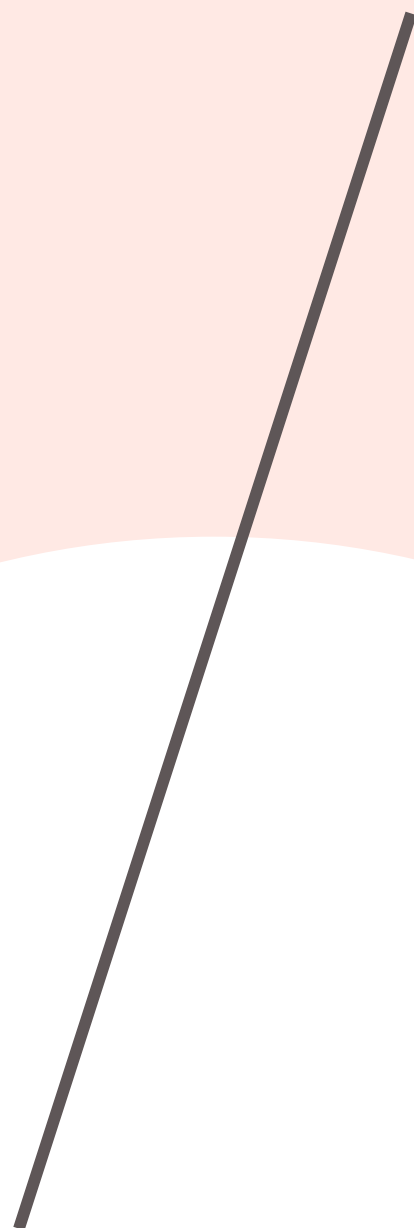


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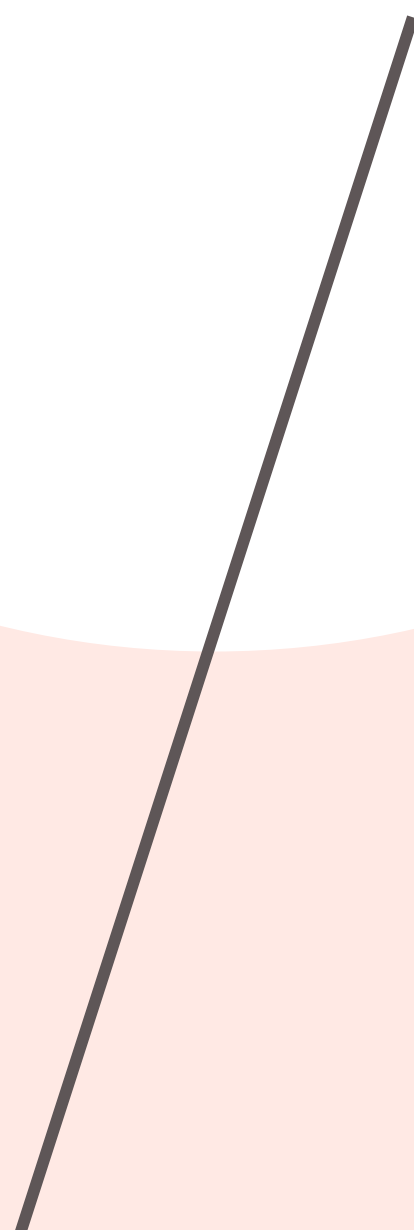
1. How aware are you of what you're feeling when you're upset or calm?
2. What is your predominant attachment style?
3. What behaviours do you do that you think might be based in your attachment style?
4. How does your attachment style influence your parenting style?
5. Are there things you might like to change? What would be they be?
6. What's one thing you can work on changing and what will you do differently?
7. Do you understand that change takes time and practice? You're still going to have times when you react in the old way, and that's OK.

8. Focus on when you get it right rather than when you slip up with an old pattern. What have you done well this week?

12



C H A P T E R



12

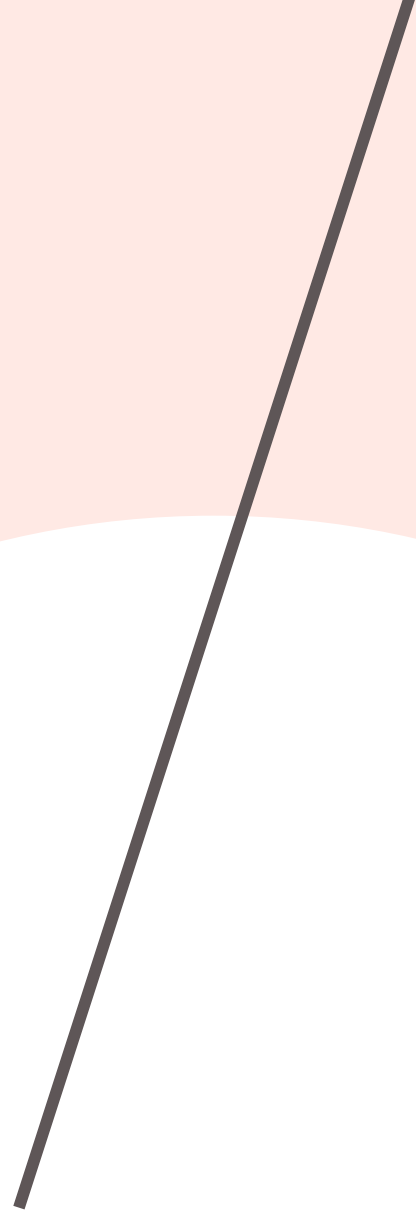


1. What needs do you have that went unmet by your mother?
2. What needs do you think your mother had, that went unmet?
3. How do you think your mother's unmet needs affected her and therefore you?
4. What would you as an adult now, like to say to your younger self?
5. What emotions have you experienced through this chapter? Can you name them?
6. Please take a moment to do the grounding exercises if you skipped them before or you're feeling a lot of emotions now and seem to be shutting down.

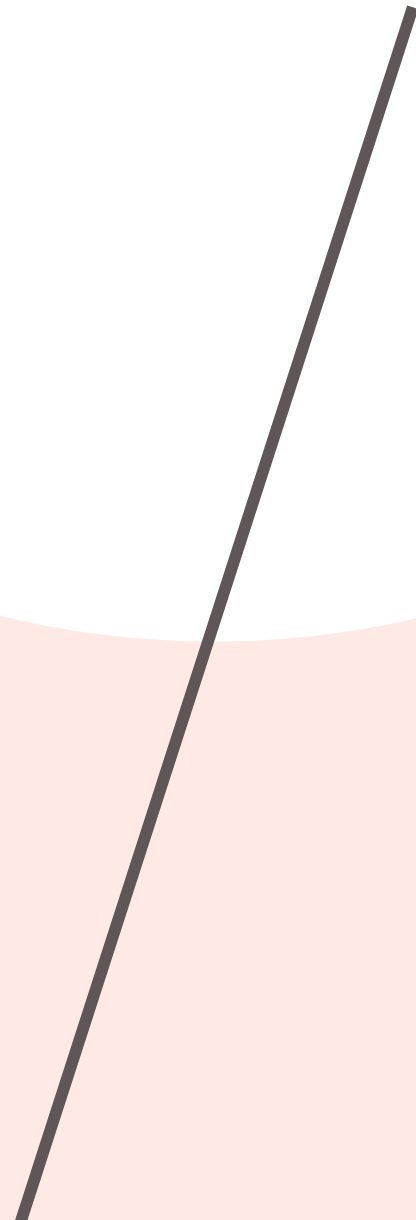
7. Can your grown up self today love and comfort that little girl you were?

8. What burdens are going to lay down from this day forward?

13



C H A P T E R



13

1. Have you been able to use your imagination? Do you need more practice?
2. What would a good friend say to you about yourself?
3. What condemnation do you heap on yourself?
4. Are you willing to stop doing that and become your own best friend?
5. How can you change the narrative of what you say to yourself to be more compassionate and nurturing? Write some things down. Do it! Right now!
6. What do you need?
7. How are you going to ask for what you need?

8. Who are you going to ask first?

9. What's your love language? Go here to find out:

<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

10. What's your personality type?

11. What services do you need for your child but have been afraid to pursue and ask for?

12. Which one will you ask for first and what will you say?

13. Take some action on at least one of these ideas today.

14



CHAPTER

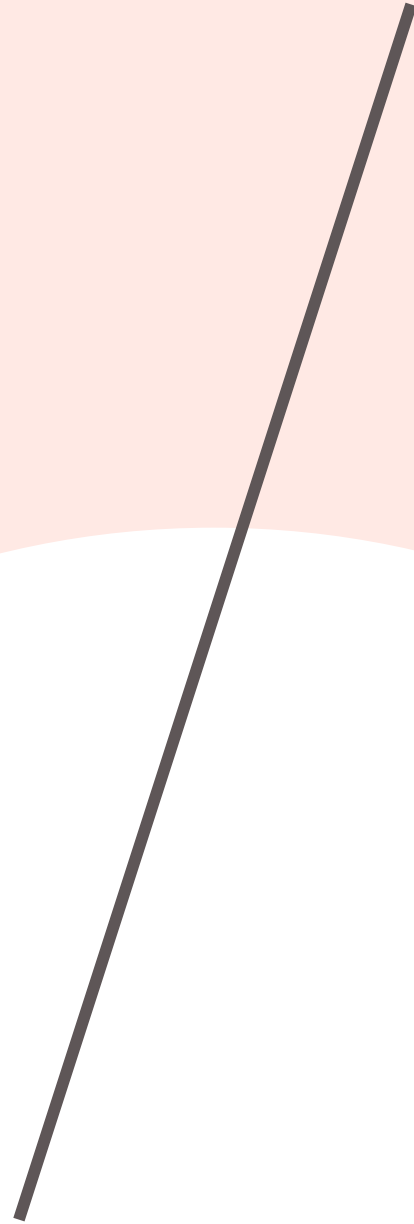
14

1. How do you feel about your child? Name some honest emotions, positive and negative.
2. Are you able to feel empathy and compassion for your child?
3. What's a good example of your empathy and compassion?
4. What losses have you experienced because of your child's autism?
5. What adaptations and changes have you had to make to accommodate your child's needs and behaviours?
6. How do you feel about making those adaptations?
7. How flexible or rigid are you with your child's behaviours and obsessions?

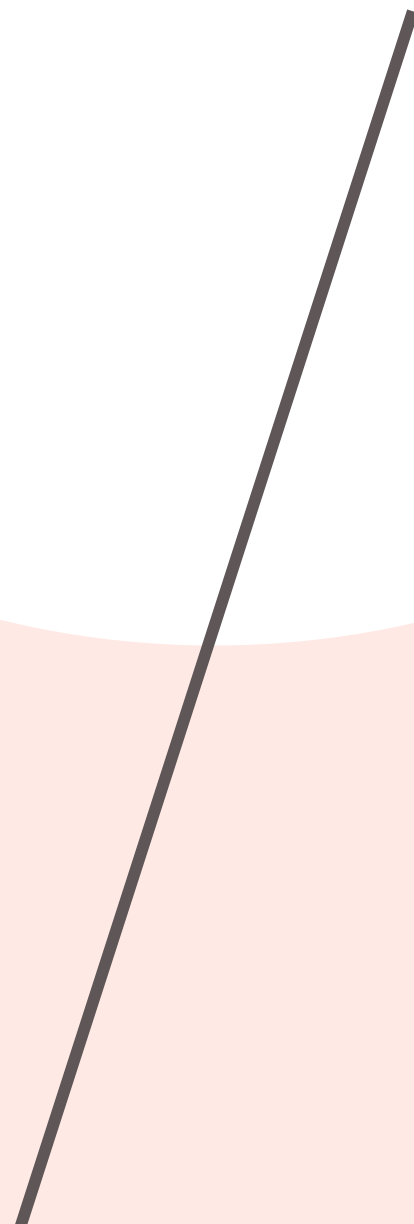
8. Are there situations when it could help your child and the rest of the family to be more flexible or more rigid? Name one or two examples.



15



C H A P T E R



15

1. Can you think of a time when someone interfered in an unhelpful way with your child's behaviours?

2. How did you feel at the time?

3. How do you feel about it now?

4. Is there something you want to change about how you feel about that situation?

What?

5. Are you able to feel compassion for them and forgive them for your own sake? Why or why not?

6. How do you react to unwanted advice about your child? Do you try to explain, apologise or educate

them? Maybe you do something else?

7. Do you want to change your responses to these people? Why or why not?



# THANKS FOR USING THE WORKBOOK

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I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST  
FOR YOUR FUTURE. X

*Liz*